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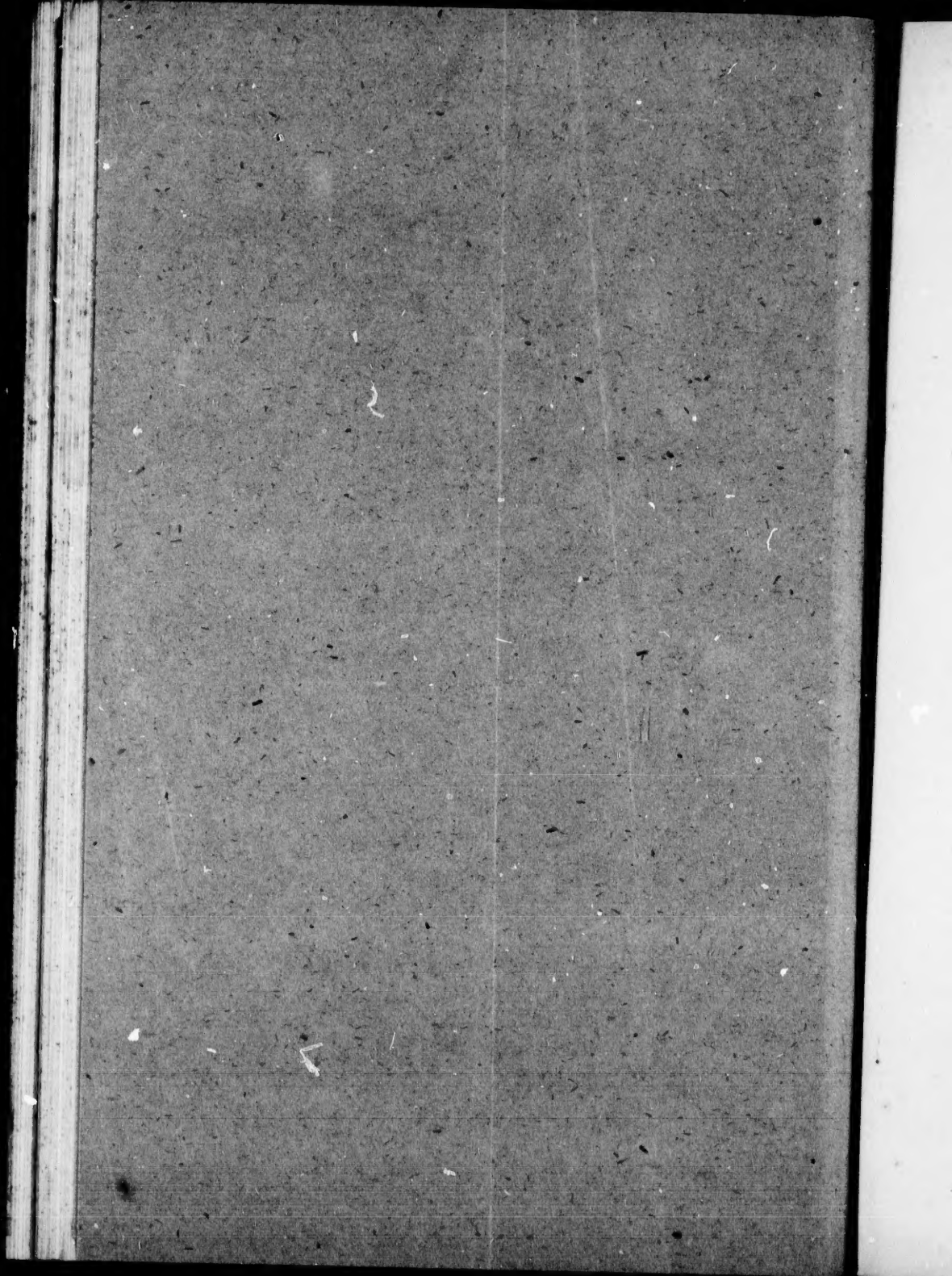
III

A  
SCRIPTURAL EXAMINATION  
OF  
CERTAIN ARTICLES  
IN  
RELIGIOUS CREEDS.

BY  
JOHN G. MARSHALL.

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HALIFAX:  
PRINTED BY WILLIAM MACNAB, 11 PRINCE STREET.  
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## AN EXAMINATION,&c.

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Before commencing an examination of the subjects first treated of in this publication, I think it just and proper, to mention the circumstances which led me to engage in the work. During some years past, I was, occasionally, hearing various particulars concerning the religious body commonly called, "The Plymouth Brethren,"—but improperly so-called, for "The Christian Brethren," is the name they have taken. I had also read some of their pamphlets, most of them sent to me from the United States, and others I have recently seen, all giving information of their religious belief; but I had formed no intention of writing anything concerning them; although suggestions to that effect had reached me. Some weeks ago, I received through the Post Office, an envelope, containing a paper, purporting to be a true representation, or standard, of parts of their religious creed. Neither name of person, or place, was given in the envelope, and to this moment I am unacquainted as to the person who sent it; and neither desire, or shall seek, any information on the point. At first I was inclined to think, that it had been sent by the Brethren, or one of them, to inform me of their sentiments on the subjects contained in the paper, or for some other purpose. But I soon concluded that it was some person not connected with them. I had previously seen an exact copy of the same paper. It had been inserted, several years ago, in a newspaper published in Montreal. In a third copy I recently received, and here correctly publish, the words:—"An enemy hath done this," will, of course, be considered, as having been inserted by, or on behalf of the Brethren.

That it may be seen, that I deal justly and fairly on the subject, I will first transcribe the paper, and then give extracts from the pamphlets, relating and applying to the several clauses of the paper; and give an answer from Scripture to each and all of them on which I have thought it requisite to treat, and offer appropriate remarks.



On carefully perusing the pamphlets, I have considered it a Christian duty, to endeavor to refute the unscriptural and erroneous opinions they contain, concerning the several most deeply important subjects, to which the Scriptures and remarks are applied. It is also due to the Brethren, that the public should know, that they are not chargeable with the unchristian and uncharitable opinions attributed to them, in some of the clauses of the paper set forth as their creed. I will bestow on them that unsolicited favor. The following is an exact copy of the paper :—

#### BRETHREN'S CREED.

(An enemy hath done this.)

1. *The Church* is composed of *believers*.
2. *We* constitute that Church.
3. All professing Christians outside of *the Church*, are connected with apostacy, infidelity and Socinianism.
4. No *denomination* owns the Spirit of God.
5. The moral law is not the rule of Christian Life.
6. The doctrine of Christ's imputed righteousness, through law-keeping, is nowhere taught in Scripture.
7. Christ, during His life, did not really and actually suffer with, or for, His people.
8. It is almost blasphemy for a christian to address the Holy Spirit in prayer, or to pray for the Spirit in any shape or way.
9. Abraham has no place in the Church, nor could any Saint have, till the Holy Ghost came, after the Ascension.
10. The Sabbath was ordained for Jews alone. Christians never had anything to do with it.
11. The choosing of Pastors is a daring encroachment upon the authority of the Holy Ghost.
12. It is a lack of faith for the christian to pray the Lord's Prayer, or in any way to express the thought conveyed in the words, "forgive us our trespasses."

Now, if this paper, in the whole, were to be taken as a real code of religious belief, it would indeed be one of a most singular and marvellous character. Some of its first clauses, exhibit the very climax of arrogance. It would stand as a monument, or disgusting exhibition of human pride, uncharitableness and presumption. It rivals, or even eclipses, the decrees of the Council of Trent, and those of the Synod of Dort; and casts the claimed infallibility of the Popedom, and the haughty Hildebrand, and Pious the Ninth, and all his ency-

clicals, and other missives into the shade. Such a creed would exhibit those who held it, as a kind of theological Ishmaelites, whose voice, if not their hand, was against all other professing christians, as being aliens from Scripture, truth, and the christian church. But as a whole, the Brethren justly deny that it belongs to their code of belief. The reader, however, by the extracts from their publications, and the Scriptures and remarks given in the answers to those extracts, will be able to form an opinion as to the accordance, or otherwise, of their belief in those clauses of the paper, to which this examination is applied. The clauses will now be treated of, in the order in which they stand in this strange and presumptuous creed.

1. The Church is composed of believers.

It may well be concluded, that no body of men, of even ordinary sense or intelligence, would frame such a bald and uncertain article as this ; and place it at the head of their religious creed. It affords such a wide sphere as to what the belief has reference, that if the word *church*, is taken in its generic meaning, of *an assembly of people*, the belief might be applied, as well to a Jewish, a Mahomedan, or a Mormon, as to a christian church. This alone, is sufficient to show that the paper, as a whole, is not a correct representation of the Brethren's creed, though some of the clauses do certainly accord with their belief, as will be shown.

2. We constitute that Church.

The preceding remarks apply here, with the addition of an unparalleled presumption, not at all likely to be publicly avowed. The following extracts from the Brethren's writings fully answer this clause :—

“ There are dear children of God in all the so-called denominations, whom the Lord knows, and will take up into the glory, by and by ; *they* are of *the Church*. If *we* only, (brethren so called) constituted *the Church*, it would be a small affair indeed. *We*, if believers, are a part of the Church, and that is all we claim to be ; and are only a fragment of it.”

3. All professing Christians outside of *the Church*, are connected with apostasy, infidelity, and Socinianism.

The following will serve on the part of the Brethren, as an explanatory answer to this Clause :—

“ Mere profession will not do, we must be *real* before God. He will and must have *the heart*. The foolish virgins do not go in to the



marriage. Matt. xxv. "The door was shut. \* \* \* God will have none but living stones in His building. Eph. ii. 21, 22. Then, if any man be outside of that which *alone* is owned of God, he must be under judgment; and therefore be connected with evil. Now, *Christendom* has the truth, but 'holds it in unrighteousness,' and so its responsibility. *Nations* have become Christians, *en masse*. Have they acted up to the light."

These last remarks concerning Christendom, are deplorably true; and it must also be admitted, that there are Churches which are involved in grievous, or even ruinous errors; and further, it is more than probable, that there are persons in truly evangelical churches, who secretly hold some unscriptural and erroneous opinions. Yet, it cannot be truly said, that all who are outside of the Church, or body of *really converted souls*,—*spiritual christians*,—are necessarily and certainly "connected with evil," either as to anti-scriptural doctrines, or immoral practices. They, as belonging to some visible church, holding the true faith, may as yet, be only *formalists*, moral in their conduct, or *seekers* of spiritual conversion and Salvation; and therefore, as in the case of the tares among the wheat, they are not to be expelled from any such visible church, or to be considered as altogether outside of it, and as being, wilfully and absolutely, "connected with evil."

#### 4. No Denomination own's the Spirit of God.

The answer of the Brethren to this charge, is as follows:—

"Of course the Holy Spirit is owned, in a sense, among all denominations, we suppose, but *practically*, we say;—the Holy Spirit is not allowed to act,—that is,—if everything is cut and dried,—so to speak, with prayer book, Priest, &c., no liberty for any to speak or pray, &c., no matter whether the Holy Spirit would so will,—every mouth is stopped, but that of the officiating Priest, &c. The word is,—'Quench not the Spirit,' (1 Thes. v. 19, 20.) But in this way the Spirit is quenched."

This explanation certainly clears the Brethren of the awful charge set forth in the above clause of the paper. As to the point of the scriptural right of *lay* church members, to speak during the public worship, if they judge they are spiritually moved to do it,—as seems to be intimated in the above answer,—it is one of a very wide range for discussion; and there are very different opinions concerning it; and the writer does not feel disposed to enter upon any examination of it

here, as it is not needful to do so. It may merely be remarked, that if no "Diothrephes" who "wish to have the pre-eminence," have yet appeared among the Brethren, it is quite possible, as their numbers increase, considering human frailties and imperfections, that some such troublesome and unmanageable characters may be found, even among the Brethren; and if two or three at a time, may think themselves moved to speak; troubles may arise, both among themselves, and as to the rest of the Church; and there will be no *loving* and *ruling* apostle John, to allay or remove the unhappy differences.

5. The moral law is not the rule of Christian life.

Here we have come to a part of this singular Creed, which requires a special examination, and a definite and rather extended answer, founded on Scripture authority, for that alone can rightly elucidate and determine it. The Brethren frankly avow *this*, to be a part of their religious faith; and in their publications, they elaborately endeavour to maintain the asserted negative. A direct issue with them is here taken; and it will be shown, on Scripture authority, that the divine moral law,—to say the least,—does to a very great extent, form the rule for the christian's life,—that is, for his practical conduct. Nothing is required to be said, regarding the term *law*, as to any human obedience to it, being meritorious, or available, for procuring the forgiveness of sins, and acceptance to the divine favour. We are all in perfect harmony on the great and consoling doctrine, that "by grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast:" and again;—"a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jusus Christ; for by the works of the law, shall no flesh be justified." (Eph. ii. 8, 9—Gal. ii. 15). It is only as to the moral law, forming any part of the rule for a Christian's conduct, that the difference exists, and, as before observed, the point can only be determined by Scripture authority.

Now, in fairness, rather copious extracts from the Brethren's writings on the subject will first be given. They are as follow:—  
 "The way this charge is put, would lead to the idea that we believed we could live as we liked, be as immoral as we please. Paul says,—Rom. 6.14, 'Ye are not under law, but under grace;' and he gives

this as a reason why sin shall not have the dominion,—“ Shall we *sin*, because we are not under *law*, but under *grace*? God forbid.’ See Rom. v. 11. The law is not a rule of *life* at all, but a rule of *death*. The law is not set before the Christian as an object, or a rule. He has higher and other motives presented to him—‘ Walk worthy of the vocation, &c.’ Eph. iv. 1,—‘ If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.’ In a word then, it is evident, that a sinner cannot be justified by the works of the law, and it is equally evident, that the law is not the rule of the believer’s life.—‘ We are justified by the faith of Christ, and He is our rule of life.’ “ He is our rule, our model, our touchstone, our all.’ ‘ The Christian is doubly dead to the law, both by its effects upon him, and by the death of Christ, on his behalf. No words can be used to express more plainly, that he has nothing more to do with *it*, nor *it* with *him* in the sight of God; for what we are dead to, we have certainly ceased to have any relation with, whatsoever.’ ‘ The Christian, in the exercise of love, naturally fulfils the law.’ In Gal. v. 13, 14, ‘ if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.’ On Rom. viii. 3, 4,—the passage ought not to have stood,—that ‘ the righteousness of the law, *might be* fulfilled in us,’—but that ‘ the righteousness of the law, *has been* fulfilled for us.’

In answering and refuting this attempted support of the position advanced in the clause, some scripture passages, directly bearing on the subject, will first be given; and then some appropriate remarks, in the way of explanation and argument. Our divine Lord at the commencement of the preceptive part of His incomparable Sermon on the Mount,—addressed to His *disciples*, as well as to the *multitude*—declared—“ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil; for verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle, shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall *do*, and *teach* them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” He then proceeded to refer to a number of the moral precepts of the law, enlarging their power and application, and declared their continued obligatory force and authority, in the words: “ Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.” He then, at the close of His discourse, made the solemn and meta-

phorical announcements, as to the man who heard these his sayings, and *obeyed* them, and thus built his house on a *rock*, and which, in the storm, remained firm and uninjured; and next, the man who heard them, and *did not obey*; and He likened him, to one who built his house on the *sand*; and in the storm "it fell, and great was the fall of it." Matt. vii. 24, &c. Now, what were His sayings, to which he referred? They were in a large degree, portions of the *moral law*, which He had been enlarging, and was teaching, that they should be heard and obeyed; and this by His chosen disciples; and surely also, by his professed followers in all future time. In none of the publications of the Brethren, which the writer has seen, is there any mention of that sermon of our Lord; or any reference to His teachings and precepts on that occasion. In one of His controversies with the Scribes and Pharisees, He charged them with making void the law, commanding children to honour their fathers and mothers. This is a part of the moral law, but did He tell *them* or *his disciples*, that it was to be set aside; or in any way to be disregarded, or weakened, by His gospel system? Nothing of the kind, but on the contrary, we find it reiterated, and enforced, as a perpetual command, in the epistle to the Ephesians, and also in the one to the Colossians. He said to his *disciples*, equally as to the multitude,—“The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ Seat, all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not ye after their works.” This was just at the close of His ministry on earth. Would He have said it, if He intended to entirely annul the moral law, under the preceding dispensation, so that, as the Brethren say,—“it should have *nothing more* to do with them, nor they with it?” Of course, He only meant such parts of the moral law, as were in accordance with His new dispensation; and nearly all parts of it are in such accordance, except as to the punishments for certain offences.

Now let us look at some of the inspired epistles for further information on the subject. In Rom. 3, after the Apostle had set forth the grand doctrine of a sinner’s “justification by faith in Christ, and not by the deeds of the law,” he closed by saying: “Do we then, make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law.” We all know that the word *establish* signifies to make anything *fixed* and *permanent*. Surely, *establishing* and *annulling*, or setting aside,

are entirely different terms. It was only as to obtaining pardon of sin, by fulfilling the law, that it was not available, and it still remained in force, as a rule for christian conduct, and to be fulfilled through faith and grace obtained for the purpose. This is clearly shown in Ch. 8 of the same epistle, where it is said : " For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh ; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Here, even of those who do " walk after the spirit," it is said, that " the righteousness of the law, *might be fulfilled* ;" showing that it was still in force, as a rule, for their conduct. Now suppose, as is quite possible, that in some instance, a believer does *not* " walk after the Spirit," but acts contrary to the law ; what then ? Will not the law take hold of him, and condemn him ? Certainly not, *if*, as the Brethren say, " it has nothing to do with him, nor he with it, in the sight of God," for as is said in 1st John, chap. 3, " Sin is the transgression of the law ;" and in Rom. 4.15, we read,— " where no law is, there is no transgression." In Gal. 5. 2. it is written : " If ye be led of the spirit ye are not under the law." And this was said to *believers*. The little word "*if*" shows that it is quite possible, that a believer might not, in some instance, or instances, be led of the spirit, but act contrary to the law ; and that *then*, it would have *something* " to do with him, and he with it ;" for he would then have come under its condemning power, and showing further, its authority as a rule of christian life and conduct. In 1 Tim. 1.8, it is written :—" But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully," which again evidently shows, contrary to the Brethren's doctrine,—that the believer has something to do with the *law*, and *he* with *it*. The epistle of James, ch. 2, contains several exhortations for the fulfillment of parts of the law, and he says, " if ye fulfil the royal law according to Scripture,— ' Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' ye do well : " and further, says : " He that speaketh evil of his *brother*, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the *law*, and judgeth the *law* ; but if thou judge the *law*, thou art not a *doer* of the *law*, but a judge." When Paul was rebuked for expressions of censure he used towards the High Priest, he answered, " I wist not, brethren, that he was High Priest, for it is

written, 'Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people;' thereby admitting that if he had known that he was High Priest, he would have been guilty of a violation of that law, as being still in force. Other portions of the New Testament scriptures to the same effect might be cited, but surely no more can be needed. It may now be asked who are right on the subject,—the *Brethren*, or our Lord Himself, and his inspired Apostles? But one answer can be given, It may be useful to give the opinion of learned and eminent men "well instructed in the things of the kingdom." That able minister and celebrated commentator, Dr. Adam Clarke, in remarking on these words of our Lord's sermon on the Mount,—“Think not that I am come to destroy the law,” (Math. 5.17.)—has thus written:—“I am not come to make the law of none effect, to *dissolve* the connexion which subsists between its several parts, or the obligation men are under to have their lives regulated by its moral precepts.” And further, in commenting on the words, “whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do, and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven,”—he has written as follows:—“What an awful consideration is this! He who by his mode of *acting, speaking or explaining* the word of God, sets the holy precept *aside*, or explains away its *force and meaning, shall be called least*,—shall have *no place* in the kingdom of Christ here, nor in the kingdom of glory above. That this is the meaning of these words, is evident enough from the succeeding verse.” On Matt. vii. 26, 28, he has written:—“Many suppose that the law of Moses is abolished, merely because it is *too strict, and impossible to be observed*; and that the gospel was brought in, to *liberate* us from its *obligations*. They were *astonished at His doctrine*. They heard the law defined in such a manner as they had never thought of before; and this sacred system of morality, urged home on their consciences, with such clearness and authority, as they had never felt under the teaching of their Scribes and Pharisees.” Again, the same learned commentator, in remarking on Rom. ch. iv., has written thus:—“The Salvation which we receive from God's free mercy, binds us to live in a strict conformity with the *moral law*; that law which prescribes our *manners*, and the Spirit by which they



should be regulated ; and in which they should be performed. He who lives not in the due performance of every christian duty, whatever faith he may profess, is either a vile *hypocrite*, or a scandalous *Antinomian*." These are strong words, but not stronger than true. Hear, lastly, what a still more eminent theologian says on the subject. The Rev. John Wesley has written :—"O keep close to the law, and the testimony. Beware of Antinomianism, making void the law, or any part of it, through faith. Even that great truth that Christ is the end of the law, may betray us into it ; if we do not consider, that He has adopted every point of the moral law, and grafted it into the law of love. Let us magnify the law, the whole written word, and make it honourable. Let this be our voice,—I prize thy commandments above gold, or precious stones. O what love have I unto thy law. All the day long is my study in it."

Now all the foregoing Scriptures, and these wise and weighty opinions,—contrary to the Brethren's doctrine,—do very clearly show, that the *believer* has a great deal to do with the *law*, and that it has very much to do with *him*. The opposite doctrine is not only a dangerous, but if carried out in practice, is of an eternally ruinous nature. But it may fairly be concluded, that here, the common saying applies to the Brethren,—that their "practice is better than their Creed."

6. The doctrine of Christ's imputed righteousness, through law keeping, is no where taught in Scripture.

So says this writer, most emphatically. But he will here show and examine, what the Brethren say on this often disputed and discussed subject. Their sentiments on it, as disclosed in their publications, are as follows :—

"You do not find in the New Testament, the words—the righteousness of Christ, or the imputed righteousness of Christ, Christ Himself is our righteousness. We are justified by his death, and resurrection." "A blessed justified state, in which God not only forgave sins, but to whom, in such state, the Lord will not impute sin." \* \* \* "Doubly blest. Which double character is most clearly presented in Rom. v. Justification by blood, v. 9 ; and justification of life, v. 18. First justified by his blood from all sin ; then justified, yea much more, justified in the life, which is the gift of righteousness," \* \* \* "Thus are we much more saved by His

life. Yes, and shall be saved by His life." The doctrine then, of imputed righteousness, seems as simple as possible. First,—on the ground, that the surety is risen in perfect righteousness, having glorified God. The payment in blood, of that surety, is reckoned to all who believe. Secondly,—on the ground of what our Representative is in glory; for what is done to a representative, is reckoned done to those whom he represents. The fact is, the whole thing is so put together of God; and is so wholly of God that the believer will not be more sure of this glory when in it, then he is now, if he believes what God says. He hath made Christ to be our life, our righteousness, our all. \* \* \* God reckons me dead, risen, justified, glorified with Christ. Oh to be like Him, and this so certain. As surely as Jesus died and rose again, so surely is it all reckoned to thee now. The righteousness of God is thine now, on the principle of faith. To enjoy it, in its full result, in blessed fruition, will soon be thine everlasting portion. Blessed hope of righteousness, as says the apostle—"For we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness, by faith." Gal. v. 5. Ours now, by imputation, then forever ours, in the full enjoyment of Sight. Blessed Lord, increase our faith."

Now this scheme, or doctrine of the Brethren, is about as unscriptural, and dangerous also, as the preceding one concerning the law. This will now be made to appear on scripture authority; for this alone can and must decide on the subject. In the first place it may be remarked, that the doctrine of *imputed righteousness*, so long held by vast numbers, was, and is considered, to mean, the personal active righteousness of Christ. But the Brethren, very properly, reject this meaning of the term. But they think that they have discovered in the New Testament scriptures, "that the righteousness of God," so often mentioned, does on the subject of the justification and final salvation of a believer, mean the righteousness of Christ, in and by His death, and by His resurrection by God; and that this resurrection life and righteousness, constitute the righteousness of the believer; and is available and sufficient for him, being as they say his righteousness before God, wholly and only in Christ, by and through his *resurrection life*. And they say, as has been seen, that "this righteousness in Christ, is the believer's now by *imputation*, and will be his eternally, "in the full enjoyment of sight." And they further say that "we are *much more* saved by Christ's life; *yes, and shall be saved by His life.*"

Now, it is not difficult to see, that this exhibition of the belief of the Brethren, is only altering the form, or mode, of the doctrine of *imputed righteousness*; and still making our Lord's righteousness, and resurrection life,—and these alone,—the righteousness of a believer, so that no personal or other righteousness, or holiness, would he ever require. They do not, it is true, expressly say this last, but it would be the legitimate effect of their doctrine; for any other, or *double* righteousness, would not be required, nor is such double righteousness of a believer mentioned in Scripture. No righteousness, or holiness of his, could be required, if, as they assert, all in Christ's is now, and forever imputed to them by God. It would seem that they have fallen into this great error, as to the imputation of righteousness through Christ's resurrection, by mistaking, as to the real design of his resurrection, and the purposes effected by it. It was essentially needful, that he should have an early resurrection from the dead, that it might thus be made manifest, that the holy and just God, was satisfied with, and had accepted his atoning and propitiating work, which He had accomplished on our behalf; for if His resurrection had been delayed, until that of all mankind, that propitiation would not have been known, and all on the subject would have been uncertain; and christianity could never have spread and become established. The Apostle says in 1 Cor. 15, "if Christ be not raised, ye are yet in your sins." His early resurrection, therefore, was requisite for the purposes just mentioned. By the words in Rom. v. 10, "We shall be saved by His life," is to be understood, as a very learned Divine has written, that "Christ's resurrection to life is the grand proof that He has accomplished whatever He had purposed, in reference to the salvation of man. 2. This may also be understood, of His life of *intercession*, for it is written,—*'He ever liveth to make intercession for us.'* Heb. vii. 25. Through this life of intercession, at the right hand of God, we are *spared* and blessed. 3. And it will not be amiss to consider, that as our salvation implies the *renovation* of our nature, and our being restored to the image of God, so we shall be saved in His life, for I suppose it is very generally agreed, that *the life of God in the soul of man* is essential to its salvation. 4. The *example*, also, of the *life* of Christ, is a means of salvation. 'He hath left us an

example that we should follow His steps.' And 'he that followeth Him, *shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*' John viii. 12.

The Brethren are quite in accordance with Scripture, in holding that a believer is justified solely on the ground of the Lord Jesus Christ's atonement, and satisfaction for his sins; and that so believing, his faith is imputed to him for righteousness; and that he is thus justified and accepted by God. Their error lies in the belief—as shown in the extracts given,—that all our righteousness, here and hereafter, is found in Christ alone, by reason of his "resurrection life; that righteousness *now*, by *imputation*, and inevitably and *certainly* ours, *in eternity*." They say nothing as to any sanctification, or holiness, to be wrought in the believer after justification—by the operation of the Holy Spirit, in the exercise of faith. Yet this is just as requisite as was his faith in Christ's atonement, for his justification. The New Testament Scriptures are full of this essential doctrine of personal sanctification and holiness. The Saviour prayed for it for His immediate disciples, and for all future believers in Him, as we see in this passage in John 17. "Sanctify them through the Truth, thy word is truth." And again, we see in Acts 26. 18. He says, "that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in me." These passages are very different from the doctrine, that all the righteousness or holiness of a believer, is in Him alone, and is imputed to the believer. There are multitudes of scriptures to refute this opinion. Here are only a few: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of His good pleasure." Phil. ii. 12, 13. "Being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." Rom. xv. 16. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." 1 Cor. ix. 27. This by the highly inspired and holy Paul:—"Having therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Cor. vii. 1. "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus ii.—"And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal Salvation unto all them that obey Him." Heb. vi.—"But

as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy, in all manner of conversation ; Because it is written, ‘ Be ye holy, for I am holy.’ 1 Peter i.—“The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen clean and white ; for the fine linen is the righteousness of Saints.” Rev. xix. The *fine linen* here mentioned, is *not* the *righteousness of, or in Christ imputed to believers*; for it is called *the righteousness of the Saints*, which through faith, the grace and Spirit of Christ hath wrought in them. This exactly corresponds with the beautiful figurative and prophetic language in Ps. xlv. “She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework.” Like a piece of beautiful tapestry, displaying resplendant objects and scenery, perfected through skilful and persevering industry ; and to carry out the figure and analogy still further, are emblematical of the graces of the believer, wrought in him by the continued operations of the Holy Spirit. Thus beautifully arrayed pure and lovely and loving, shall the faithful,—the Church, as the Bride, be brought unto her loving and faithful Bridegroom and King, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now if, as the Brethren say, all a believer’s righteousness, at present, and in the future, are in Christ alone, why were all those cited exhortations and commands ; and so many others, as to righteousness and holiness in the believer, requisite, and so solemnly given and enforced. According to their doctrine, they are altogether superfluous, and like works of supererogation. But they are the words of the God of truth and holiness, and most clearly show, that the righteousness and sanctification of a believer, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, and by faith and obedience, are essentially requisite, in order to his full consecration and devotedness to the service of his God and Saviour, while here, and to a due preparation for a place in His holy and eternal kingdom. One of the cited extract’s from the Brethren’s writings, runs thus :—“Blessed hope of righteousness, as says the apostle, ‘for we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith ;—ours now, by imputation, and then forever ours, in the full enjoyment of Sight.” Now, these are more mistaken and ruinous passages, as to the Brethren’s doctrine on the subject. They are like bomb-shells thrown by themselves into their own camp ; for their expressed “*hope of righteousness ;*”

and the *hope* and *waiting for it*, mentioned in the text cited, show conclusively, that the righteousness so far from being *in Christ*, and so inevitably and permanently sure, is quite *contingent* and *problematical*. It is merely the "*hope of righteousness*" and is to be *waited for* by "*faith*." Rather a different thing from being "*ours now, by imputation, and forever ours in sight*." The Brethren who are so conversant with Scripture, will know where to find the text, which says,—“what a man seeth, (or possesseth) why doth he yet hope for.” They have committed a most ruinous mistake in citing that text, as to *hoping* and *waiting*, for this alone is quite sufficient to destroy their whole doctrine of righteousness *now*, imputed.

The following sentiments on the subject, expressed in the writings of the same learned Divines, before named, are most weighty, and deserving of regard. Dr. Clarke, in commenting on Rom. iii., says;—“On considering this glorious scheme of Salvation, there is great danger, lest while we stand amazed at what was done *for us*, we neglect what must be done *in us*. Christ has done much to save us, and the way of Salvation is made plain; but unless he *justify* our *conscience* from dead works, and purify our *hearts* from all sin, His passion and death will profit us nothing.” The Rev. John Wesley has written thus :—“A man has been reprov'd, suppose for drunkenness :—O ’ says he, ‘I pretend to no righteousness of *my own*; Christ is *my righteousness*.’ Another has been told, the extortioner and the unjust shall not inherit the kingdom of God. He replies, with all assurance, ‘I am unjust in myself, but I have a spotless righteousness in Christ.’ And thus, though a man be as far from the practice, as from the tempers of a Christian, yet he has armour of proof, against all conviction, in what he calls,—the *righteousness of Christ*.”

In concluding this subject, it may, as on the one preceding be justly said of the Brethren, concerning it, that their practice, is far more Scriptural and better than their Creed, and their arguments in its explanations and support.

7. “Christ during His life, did not really and actually suffer with, or for His people.”

This unscriptural and infidel opinion, does not belong to the Brethren; but on the contrary, they are quite sound and Scriptural, on the Cardinal doctrine of our divine Lord’s atoning and satisfying work,



on man's behalf : as the following extracts from one of their publications fully show :—"He bore all our Sins, in His own body, on the tree. He was made a curse for us. He drained, on our behalf, the cup of God's righteous wrath. He deprived death of its sting, and the grave of its victory. He gave up His life, for us. He went down into death, where we lay, in order that He might bring us up, in eternal association with Himself, in life, righteousness, favour, and glory, before our God, and His God, our Father, and His Father."—In another passage they mention :—"The finished atonement of Christ, developed by God the Holy Ghost, in the word, and made good in the happy experience of all true believers."

8. "It is almost blasphemy for a christian to address the Holy Spirit in prayer or to pray for the spirit in any shape or way."

This is not a true representation of the Brethren's belief, on the subject of prayer for the Holy Spirit. Their sentiments concerning it are as follows:—

"We need not pray for the Spirit, since He is *with* us, and *in* us; and we should not pray for what we already have. If any man prays for the Spirit, it is evident that he has not got the Spirit, or in other words, that he is none of Christ's. Were it prayed that the Spirit might not be grieved; or that the Saints might be filled with Him, it were scriptural. What would it have been, for a disciple, in the presence of Jesus, to have asked the Father to send His Son; to raise up the Messiah, when the Messiah was actually there."

These remarks must evidently be considered as relating to assemblies for public worship. Now, these are generally, or indeed, it may be said, always composed of:—1. True believers, that is, Spiritual Christians. 2.—Seekers of salvation; and 3.—Unregenerated and unconverted persons. In such an assembly is no prayer to be made for the Holy Spirit's presence and operations. Certainly not, as it would seem from the Brethren's doctrine. Surely, they must admit that His presence and influences are needed for the two last classes. Yea, and for the *first* also. The prayers for the Spirit are very properly, and in accordance with Scripture, made for the whole assembly. And they are so made in all true and evangelical churches. If the Brethren's doctrine on the subject were fully believed, and acted upon throughout Christendom, the churches, as

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to spirituality, would speedily die out, and christianity would all but vanish from the earth.

There is one passage of Scripture on this subject of praying for the Spirit, and by our Lord himself, which is perfectly conclusive. It is this: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." And mark, this was said to his disciples—believers in Him—and who then, doubtless, possessed the Holy Spirit in some degree; for Scripture declares, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost;" and they were believers in Him, as the Messiah, and Christ the Lord. Here we see, that the promise is for all who *ask*, and is available for all believers, as well as others, and to the end of time. Now, what will the Brethren say to this text, so universal in its terms? They must often have read it, and therefore it does seem strange, that they have formed the opinions contained in the extracts given. They are certainly blamable, for the implied censure they have passed on the Lord's people in other communions for praying as they are scripturally encouraged, and find it needful to do, for the Holy Spirit's visits, and his gracious operation, to instruct, strengthen, comfort and guide them.

Very many of the Lord's people, through all ages, have had similar distressing spiritual bereavements, and gracious and happy deliverances, as those which David experienced. They have in their bereaved and deeply afflicted state, prayed like to the following fervent supplications.

Return O Holy Dove, Return  
Sweet messenger of Rest:  
I hate the Sins that made Thee mourn,  
And drove Thee from my breast.

The dearest Idol I have known,  
Whate'er that Idol be;  
Help me to tear it from Thy throne.  
And worship only Thee.

He who composed these plaintive and Spiritual lines, was not only a poet of the highest order, but a learned and eminent christian minister; very much better instructed in the things of the kingdom than any of the Brethren.

There is another rather strange opinion they hold, on this subject, concerning the Holy Spirit ; and which is not warranted by Scripture. In mentioning our Lord's appearance among the disciples, on the day of His resurrection they say :—

“ The Lord had actually breathed upon them, and said,—‘ Receive ye the Holy Ghost.’ Of course this was not the gift of the Comforter, as such, the promised One that was to take the place of Christ upon the earth ; but rather the communication by the Holy Ghost, of His own risen life. We know from Acts i., that the Spirit, the Comforter, was not yet given. Indeed we ought to gather it, from the simple fact, that the Lord was not yet gone. ‘ And if I go not away, the Comforter will not come.’ He was seen there, and He commands them, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but should wait for the promise of the Father.”

Now, contrary to all this it was manifestly as the promised Comforter, that He bestowed that blessing on them at the time mentioned. They had seen Him put to death, as if helpless and unable to deliver Himself from His enemies ; and they were mourning, and in distress, and unbelief, as to His resurrection. They would not believe the women who had seen Him ; and when He appeared among them, they, at first, thought that it was a Spirit, and were terrified ; and He had to say—“ Handle me and see, for a Spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have ;” and he took meat, “ and did eat before them.” Thomas declared that he would not believe, unless he “ could put his fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side.” They did not, as the Brethren say, need any communication from the Holy Spirit, to convince them of His resurrection life, for some of them had seen Him die on the Cross, and now they see Him in the living body before them. And it was evidently to comfort them, and strengthen and confirm them in the faith, that he conveyed to them the Holy Spirit on the occasion under notice ; and this was in part fulfilment of His previous promises of the Comforter, not only for them, but for all His tried and faithful people, to the end of time. These promises of the Comforter, were not for the then unbelieving multitude, or other unbelievers in any future time. The sublime descent of the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, as foretold by the prophet Joel, and mentioned by Peter, was not at all as a Comforter. It was given, in part, to qualify the

disciples to declare the glad tidings of Salvation to all nations and tribes in their own languages ; and further in infinite condescension and mercy, to give the unbelieving and wicked rulers and multitude, who had put Him to death, this additional evidence of His being the true Messiah. The Spirit was then given, as to them, as an alarming, convicting and converting Spirit. On the disciples addressing them, they were alarmed, and as it is written, " were pricked in their heart, and said, men and brethren what shall we do." The Holy Spirit is never given, at first, to the unregenerate and unbelieving, as a Comforter : but to *quicken* and " convince of sin, of righteousness, and judgment," according to the words of our Lord. The opinions of the Brethren, on these points, are about as erroneous and inconsistent with Scripture, as those on the *Law*, and *Imputed Righteousness*. Their error chiefly consists, in considering the promise of our Lord, for the Comforter, and that in Joel, as being one and the same ; whereas they are distinct and separate, and for different purposes and effects. The one for the Comforter, being only for true believers. The other, chiefly, or only, for the unregenerate, for the purposes already mentioned, and those declared in the passages in Joel. Neither in these passages, nor in the citation of them by Peter, is the word *Comforter* used ; and by our Lord they are called, " the promise of the Father."

Surely no more need be here given, to prove, that in several of the opinions of the Brethren which have been shown, regarding this most vital subject of prayer for the Holy Spirit, they are involved in most injurious and dangerous errors.

9. Abraham has no place in the Church, nor could any Saint have, till the Holy Ghost came after the Ascension.

This is the title of the clause, or article of the Creed, as it appears in the paper sent to this writer ; and which, as already mentioned, was copied from a newspaper published in Montreal. But the Brethren's pamphlet, on the subject, has the still more extraordinary and offensive title :—

" Do the Old Testament Saints belong to the Church of God."

This strange and startling question, so contrary to Scripture and universal belief, seems to imply that they do not belong to the Church

of God ; and we shall see from the extracts which will be presently given that this is indeed the belief of the Brethren. This naturally suggests another question ;—to what Church do they, or rather, *did* they belong. To take the original word Church, as meaning an assembly of people ; did they belong to Jupiter and Juno, Vulcan, Venus, and Ashteroth, and the other ancient supposed deities ; or to Brahma Creeshna, or the fire worshippers. They cannot, of course, be thought to belong to the Church of Mahomet, or Swedenbourg, or Jacob Behmen, or to Joe Smith's and Brigham Young's Mormons,—for all these are thousands of years, since their time. If the belief of the Brethren concerning them were true, those excellent characters, "Saints," as they call them, would be in a most awful and wretched condition ; for it would exclude them from the *Jewish* as well as the *Christian* Church, for the former was as much a church of God, as is the latter.

Let us now look at what the Brethren say concerning them. The following very extended extracts are from one of their pamphlets, expressly on the subject :—

"The question for consideration is: Do the Old Testament Saints belong to the Church of God? I at once reply in the negative. The Old Testament Saints do not belong to the Church of God; and further it is simply impossible that they should do so, for—1. The Church or building of God supposes the existence of a corner and of a head stone. 2—The Body of Christ supposes the existence of a Head. 3. The Bride of Christ, supposes the existence of a bridegroom." "The foundation stone was laid in the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Lord declared on the confession of Peter, 'Thou art the Son of the living God; He would build His Church. He spoke of it as a future thing. I *will* build my church. There is a chief corner stone, and that, too, is Christ. This building of God has its Head Stone, and this is Christ. Who, then, are the intermediate stones, completing the building of God? They are the poor sinners who have been saved by God's grace in this day of grace. Eph. 2—Sinners dead in trespasses and sins saved by sovereign grace. Now, do the Old Testament Saints belong to this building of God—His Church. I reply in the negative. First—Because before the death and resurrection of Christ, the foundation stone was not laid. Secondly—Because the Holy Ghost had not descended as now, to dwell in the Church." "It has been asked did not God dwell in the Old Testament Saints? Clearly not. The Jews could not so

much as approach God; because sin had not been put away, and peace had not been made. They were individual and isolated souls, saved by grace, and the operations of the Spirit of God. Scripture does not teach that they were individually indwelt by God." \* \* \* "Do the Old Testament Saints belong to this one body, of which Christ is the Head? No." "Jehovah will yet show Himself to Israel, as the Bridegroom, as Christ will to the Church—His Bride, for whom He gave Himself. Abraham knew nothing of this, he was the *friend* of God. The saints in days gone by, or in dispensations yet to come, do not, nor will, have the same position, spiritual blessings and privileges, as the Church of God,—the Body of Christ, the Bride of the Lamb. The saints of other ages may, and will, I doubt not, be called to the marriage supper of the Lamb; and so they will indeed be blessed; and the blessing will be full, according to their capacity, and power of apprehension, but they will not have the same blessing, and the same relationship to Christ as the Church, His Bride. I am sure, says one, I am quite content to be as Abraham, and many more of those dear Old Testament Saints. Well, I reply, God is not content that you should be so blessed; and I for one, am therefore not content either."

Now, here is a fabrication, which for erroneous conception, bold presumption, and dogmatic assertion, as regards divinely revealed truth, is about equal to any of the numerous invented schemes, and novelties of opinion, which have ever been put forth concerning that truth. To every truly instructed christian, as well as every sensible person, who has read the Scriptures, it will be nearly as great a trial of patience to read it, as it has been to this writer to transcribe it. Some of such readers, will, probably, perceive a feeling arising within them bordering on indignation, but let them suppress it, and impute the erroneous and dishonoring opinion, to a lamentable defect of Scriptural knowledge, as regards the subject; and pray that these deluded persons may become rightly informed, and recovered from their very serious error.

If it had merely been said that these excellent and exalted characters, did not, strictly speaking, belong to the present christian church, it would have been somewhat less offensive, and more bearable; but so positively to assert, that they do not, in any way "belong to the Church of God," does seem dishonoring and insulting to a God of justice and righteousness; and also insulting towards those eminent Saints, whom God has so highly distinguished, and



declared his approval of their devoted piety, and firm and persevering faithfulness; and of whom He has said the world was not worthy. *Not belonging to the Church of God*, and only as by mere *special favor* permitted to be present at the marriage feast!!! Verily, not so slighted and dishonored will they be, but will occupy the very highest and most honorable places on that glorious and supremely happy occasion. And most deservedly so; for they had only the *promises* of the delivering Messiah, on which to rest, through long and dreary ages of trial, persecution, and sufferings; and they firmly and faithfully endured them all, walking as pilgrims on the earth, and in their typical sacrifices and offerings, looking confidently for the advent of the Messiah, and for the promised heavenly and everlasting inheritance. We, under the present dispensation, have received the indubitable and confirming evidence of the fulfilment of those promises. The divine and gracious Messiah—the Desire of all nations—has actually appeared in our rebellious and wicked world, and has, in part, fulfilled, and is still fulfilling, those gracious promises; and yet, through the long ages which have since elapsed, how few, comparatively, have, in any degree reached towards the standard of fervent piety, the unshaken courage, and the persevering integrity and faithfulness, of those patriarchs, prophets, and other ancient saints, so highly distinguished and beloved by God.

It is deserving of special notice, that the person who penned those erroneous and dishonoring notions, concerning those excellent characters, has offered no scriptural proof to show their validity. His only foundation is,—“I believe.” I reply in the negative. “I do not believe.”

Now, let us look at some scriptures, which will fully refute those erroneous and discreditable notions concerning those illustrious characters. To Abraham, called the “friend of God,” and the “father of the faithful,” the Almighty declared, as seen in Gen. 22, that as a reward for his obedience,—“in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed;” thereby alluding to the Lord Jesus Christ, who as to the flesh lineally descended from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and others of those Old Testament saints. Moses and Elias, two of the most eminent of them, held intercourse with our Lord, during His transfiguration on the Mount, and spake with Him concerning His decease.

Concerning that promise to Abraham, in Gen. xxii., that in his seed, all the nations of the earth should be blessed, it is said in Rom. iv., "that it might be sure to all the seed, not that only, which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,"—that is, believing Jews and Gentiles, as it is written,—"I have made thee a father of many nations." Now, would it not be strange, indeed, that this so highly honoured patriarch, declared by God Himself, to be, by that faith, "the father of us all,"—believing Jews and Gentiles,—should not belong to this comprehensive Church of God; and yet be the *father* of it. What a monstrous conception,—the *father* of a family, and yet not belong to it! Again, in Gal. iii. 25, 29.—"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one, in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Now, here, again, is it not a marvellous idea, that they all, Jews, and Gentile Greeks, were Abraham's seed; and of one seed or Church, and yet *he* did not belong to *them* nor *they* to *him*. But, further, it is said in Eph. ii., "Now therefore, ye are no more strangers, and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." Here, is another matter for wonder, that although this Ephesian Church, was founded on "the prophets," as well as on the apostles, and were "fellow citizens with those Saints and prophets, and of the household of God," that is His Church, yet these prophets and Saints did not, according to the "Brethren," form any part of that building or Church of God, or have any place in it. Now let those prophets and Saints, being one-half of the foundation be taken away, and no prophet will be needed, to tell what will become of the building. But still further, in Eph. iii. 14, there is, concerning the Lord Jesus, this passage,—“of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.” Now, surely all the members of a family must be said to belong to it; and as surely, all those Old Testament Saints are in heaven; and therefore, according to the express and comprehensive words of the text, they form a part of the whole of the eternally saved, as one united family. They were all virtually included in the Abrahamic Spiritual and Christian Covenant, and believed in the divine

Messiah and Christ, who, as to them, was yet to appear. So far from all those patriarchs and Saints being in any inferior position, or circumstances, they have been placed by our Lord Himself, in most eminently distinguished and exalted positions. He said to the Jews:—"Ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God; and you yourselves thrust out."—(Luke xiii. 28.) He has made Abraham's bosom, the symbol of the paradise or heaven, of the everlasting happiness of all the righteous and faithful; and who are mentioned in the Revelation, as having gained the victory, and "sing the Song of Moses," as well as "the Song of the Lamb;" for He was "the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world." It is noticeable, that the Song of Moses, is put before the Song of the Lamb, but in both, all the redeemed and saved, will equally join.

Again may be submitted the opinion of the eminent and learned theologian and commentator before named, on the subject here treated of. On the words,—“of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.—Eph. iii. 15. He says;—Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, on earth, the Spirits of just men made perfect, in a separate state; and all the holy angels in heaven, make but one family, of which God is the Father and Head. St. Paul does not say, of whom the *families*, as if each Order formed a distinct *household*; but he says *family*; because they are all *one*, and of *one*. And all this family is *named*, derives its origin and being from God, as children derive their name from him who is the father of the family.” Further, in his comment on the words in Heb. xi. 40. “That they without us should not be made perfect,” He says,—Believers before the flood, after the flood, under the law, and since the law, make but one Church. The gospel dispensation is the last, and the Church cannot be considered as *complete* till the believers under all dispensations are gathered together.”

Now in reference to those unscriptural and dishonoring opinions of the Brethren, concerning those eminent and illustrious Old Testament patriarchs, prophets, and other Saints; let us, from a brief view of their pious faith and obedience, as recorded in the Scriptures, judge if they are not *worthy* of an *equality*, if not *superiority*, as to position in the heavenly State, when compared with the saved under the Chris-

tian dispensation. In so viewing the subject, we will see how just and equitable it will be, for the just and righteous God and Judge, to place those noble and faithful characters, in that equality, if not even in higher positions in glory, than the others. To begin with Enoch, it is written, that "he walked with God;" by which we must conclude, that he never halted or wavered in his faith, love, and obedience; and for that devotedness was translated to heaven, without undergoing the pains of death. Next, we have the equally righteous and faithful Noah, who for his integrity, as declared by God, was saved with all his family, when all the rest of the world were destroyed. Then follows the illustrious Abraham, called by God, "His Friend;" and for whose firm and ready obedience, in the most painful trials, the righteous God declared to him, "In thy seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." Next we see Isaac and Jacob, the pious and obedient; Joseph, pious, righteous, and of integrity, under trying temptation. The courageous and faithful Moses follows, so highly favored by God, that he was for forty days together, and many times subsequently, permitted to see His glory, and so closely to commune with Him, that the face of Moses shone with the beams of that Glory. He was further honored by being made the medium of communicating the laws and rituals of the divine dispensation then established; and was the Antetype of the Divine Mediator. Then follows, the equally courageous, disinterested and faithful Joshua. The undaunted and equally disinterested Caleb deserves also to be mentioned. The valiant and pious David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, must surely be mentioned; also, the just and devoted Samuel, and the bold and zealous Elijah, who for his integrity and faithfulness, was divinely favored in like manner as Enoch. Next, the equally zealous and faithful Elisha. The pious and zealous kings, Hezekiah and Josiah, so diligent and active in suppressing idolatry, must surely not be omitted. Next, for very special notice, is the wise and devoted Daniel, to whom the angel expressly declared that he was greatly beloved by God. Then follow the highly endowed Ezra, the faithful priest and governor, and the restorer of the law; and succeeding him, the pious, zealous and liberal Nehemiah. And further must be named, the sublime and evangelical prophet Isaiah: the bold, zealous and sympathizing Jeremiah, so affectionately bewail-

ing the calamities and sufferings of his people. Ezekiel, Zechariah, and all the other remaining prophetic writers, so highly honored and distinguished with divine gifts and graces, must also be considered to belong to the list of the illustrious and divinely exalted characters who have been named, together with many others of the faithful and devoted servants of God, whose names we see in the sacred revelations of the Old Testament, and "whose record is on high," in the book of *eternal life*. But the author of that dishonoring tract says, that he is not content that these illustrious and divinely honored characters, should be on an equality with him in the heaven of eternal glory and happiness. He is indeed free of the imputation of thinking that such preference is afforded to him, because of his superior faith and sanctity, but he has formed the unscriptural and strange opinion that the wise and just God has thought it proper to place true and faithful believers, under our dispensation, in a higher position in the kingdom of glory, than those Old Testament saintly characters. It does seem almost marvellous that, not to say a christian, but any rational person, should form an opinion so contrary to the eternal principles of truth and righteousness. It would truly be an arrangement of this unjust character, that grievous and aggravated sinners, long in rebellion, were, at the tenth and eleventh hours, through abounding mercy saved, as Job hath said, "by the skin of their teeth," and were more highly exalted in position, and in the divine favor, and in glory, and in happiness, than all those illustrious and faithful servants of God. To say nothing of divine revelation, the mere thought of its being so decreed, by a glorious Being, who is the very fountain of *justice and equity*, is simply monstrous and intolerable.

Now in coming to a close, on this most extraordinary conception, this writer in all good feeling, tenders this prudent advice to the Brethren, to prayerfully and diligently search the Scriptures, on the subject, which will doubtless, lead them to abandon this unscriptural opinion: and as far as possible, gather in all the publications which endeavour to maintain it; and do with them, as Luther did with the Pope's Bull, *destroy them by fire*. They may be assured, that no really Scripturally instructed Christian, or just and sensible person, will unite with them, knowing that they hold such unjust and incredible opinions.

10. The *Sabbath* was ordained for Jews alone,—Christians never had anything to do with it.

On this clause, the Brethren say in their writings:—Where in Scripture have we such an expression as the “Christian Sabbath?” Where is the Lord’s day, ever called the Sabbath? We would not yield to any of our dear Brethren, in the various denominations around us, in the pious observance of the Lord’s day. We love and honour it, with all our hearts; and were it not, that the gracious Providence of God has so ordered it in these realms, that we can enjoy the rest and retirement of the Lord’s day, without pecuniary loss, we should feel called upon to abstain from business, and give ourselves wholly up to the worship and service of God, on that day; not as a matter of cold legality, but as a holy and happy privilege. It would be the deepest sorrow to our hearts to think that a true Christian should be found taking common ground with the ungodly, the profane, the thoughtless and the pleasure-hunting multitude, in desecrating the Lord’s day. We believe the Christian’s retirement from all secular things, cannot possibly be too profound on the Lord’s day. The idea, of any one calling himself a Christian, making the Lord’s day, a season of what is popularly called, recreation, unnecessary travelling, personal convenience, or profit in temporal things, is to us, perfectly shocking.”

All true Christians will perfectly agree with the Brethren, in these pious and spiritual sentiments, concerning the proper observance of the Lord’s day.

11. The choosing of Pastors is a daring encroachment on the authority of the Holy Ghost.

The Brethren hold this, if not in express terms, yet in effect, to be true according to Scripture. The following extracts from their writings will clearly show their sentiments; and what they consider Scripture evidence in their support:—

“Elders and Deacons were local officers. Ministry, in the sense of a gift for edification, was not. It was a given member, (eye, foot, ear, as is said), of the whole body of Christ. The difference is all important as to the ministry; and the whole Clerical and Donominational system crumbles into dust, under unquestionable Scriptural fact.”—Has God ordained a divinely appointed ministry, to rule and teach in the Church? Scripture re-



cognizes teachers who don't rule; and rulers who do not teach. Teaching was a desirable qualification for those who ruled, but all had it not. If we turn to Timothy, this does give us the order and care of the Church, and watching over sound doctrine; which was the immediate object of his being left at Ephesus; but it does not give us anything of appointment of ministry; not the remotest hint of appointing to office, and its absence is most significant. He was to instruct, not to ordain. In 1 Tim. v. 17, the Apostle distinguished those who did not labour in word and doctrine. Timothy is directed to communicate truths he had learned, to faithful men, able to teach, but to ordain teachers, never, neither he nor any one else. The distinction of teaching and ruling was thoroughly understood; they might be united in one person, but were distinct. Paul and Barnabas chose elders for them in every church. So Titus was to establish elders in every city." "I believe in a divinely appointed ministry." All the New Testament shows there was such a divinely given ministry. It subsists to this day."

It is not very often that a controversial writer, who is of ordinary skill and judgment, produces facts and arguments which serve to destroy the propositions and cause he is endeavoring to establish. But the writer of the foregoing extracts has manifestly done this very thing, and thereby most materially helped to destroy his own erroneous theory. Now, let the reader bear in mind that it was the object of that writer, to show, that it is an encroachment on the authority of the Holy Spirit, for men, in any way or form to ordain and set apart, persons to officiate in the Sacred Ministry, and publicly teach Christianity. And now, look how he has endeavored to support his novel dictums. He begins with Scripture authority—he could do no less—and he first cites Timothy, or rather the inspired Paul writing to Timothy, and he says, "Timothy was left at Ephesus to watch over sound doctrine." So far he is right. But how was Timothy to do it? It is shown in the same ch. 1, of 1 Tim., by "charging," that is, *teaching*, "some that they teach no other doctrine," and not to "give heed to fables," &c. After giving several instructions as to the faith and conduct of believers, Paul, in the same Epistle, says to Timothy: "These things command and teach, and give attendance to exhortation." Further in 2 Tim. ii. 15, he says to him: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth;" and again, in ch. iv. 2.5, "Preach

the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort," \* \* \* "do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." All this shows, that Timothy was left at Ephesus for many other purposes, than merely to "watch over sound doctrine," as that writer has said. He has further written that "there is not anything of appointment of Ministry, not the remotest hint of appointing to office. He was to instruct, not to ordain: to communicate truths he had learned to faithful men able to teach, but to ordain teachers, never, neither he nor anyone else." Now, in answer to this strange inconsistency of assertion are the following scripture facts: *First*—That Timothy himself had been ordained to the ministry as a teacher: not *personally* by the Lord, as the twelve apostles and Paul had been, but by the "laying on of the hands of the presbytery," or elders, as is seen in 1 Tim. iv. 14. The text in 2 Tim. ii., 2, says, "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Surely, this means an appointment to office, and for the ministry of teaching. But the Brother says no; and that this is no ordination of *teachers*. This is, indeed, passing strange, that they were selected as being able to teach, and yet they were not appointed, or to act as teachers. Here is certainly an instance of what is generally called "a contradiction in terms." The choosing of such persons, and committing the truths to them, were expressly ordaining them as teachers of those truths. The word *ordain* means choosing, appointing, or setting apart for any particular purpose or purposes. Does the writer mean that such "faithful men," were to be chosen because of being able to teach others, and yet they were not to teach them, or to act at all as teachers. Surely he does not mean such an absurdity, though his words express it, and thus they completely destroy his whole theory; and *himself* has done it. He has given further proof to the like destructive effect, by saying that Titus was "to establish elders in every city." Why did he not give the text, showing for what purposes each and all of them were established. Here they are in Tit i. 9, 12, 13. "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince gainsayers." "A prophet of their own said 'the Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.' This witness is true, wherefore rebuke them

sharply, that they may be sound in the faith." All this again looks very much like appointment to the office of a *teacher*, and also for *teaching*. But why did the writer use the word "establish," instead of "ordain" which is the word in the text which he cited, as to Titus ordaining elders? He has gained nothing by the change of word, for any dictionary will inform him, that they are synonymous terms. It would seem as if he thought, *Ordain*, looked very much like the almost universal mode of appointing to the ministry for teaching and ruling.

But further, as to an ordained or appointed ministry, both for teaching and ruling, see 1 Thes. v. 12, 13—"And we beseech you brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly, for their work's sake." And again, in Heb. xiii. 7, "Remember them which have the rule over you; who have spoken unto you the word of God." Further, in 1 Peter v. 1. He says to the Elders,—“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof,” &c.

The concluding extract from the writings of one of the Brethren, says;—"I believe in a Divinely appointed ministry. All the New Testament shows there was such a Divinely given ministry. It subsists to this day."

He thus, in effect, contends that the appointment to the ministry by *human means*, in any form, or in modes of any description, are unscriptural, and improper; and that the continuance of the ministry, can lawfully take place only by Divine selection and appointment. Of course he does not mean by this, that every time duly qualified ministers are wanted, in the hundreds of thousands of churches, the Divine Spirit comes down, as on the day of Pentecost, and selects and sets apart all who are required; or that our Lord Himself, or an angel does it. No one ever knew, or heard, of any such direct divine appointment, since the time of the apostle Paul. Since then, to the present day, the appointments to the ministry have ever been made, and can only be made through human instrumentality, and as has been herein shown from Scripture, it was by the Divine Head of the Church arranged and appointed, to be so done, that is, after due examination by ordainment to the office, by one or more of those already in the ministry, by the laying on hands, or in some other appropriate mode.

The Brethren themselves, are not all ministers and teachers, but only certain persons of the Brotherhood ; and if these are not actually, and in a formal manner, appointed as such teachers, they are recognized as such ; and *virtually*, and in *reality*, are chosen or appointed to the office, by the rest of the Church. There is, therefore, not among themselves, any more than others, any such direct divine selection and appointment, as that for which they contend.

Surely more than enough has now been shown, to prove that on this subject also, the opinions of the Brethren are unscriptural and erroneous. These mistakes and errors, however, are not of a fatal and ruinous nature.

12. It is a lack of faith for the Christian to pray the Lord's Prayer, or in any way to express the thought contained in the words, "forgive us our trespasses."

This clause does not *accurately* represent the sentiments and belief of the Brethren, on the points or opinions therein set forth. The following are the sentiments of the Brethren concerning them :— "What is called the Lord's Prayer, was given to the disciples, as Jews, before accomplished redemption. It is not in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, as we pray now ; therefore not intended for Christians. Christ says,— '*hitherto* ye have asked nothing *in my name* ;'— John ix., 13, 14–16, 24. We have no objections to any person using this prayer, if so disposed. As to *forgiveness of Sins*, this is among the things *freely given* to us of God, through the perfect finished work of Christ, which we already *have*, (if saved.) Though children of God, we have many Sins, and shortcomings, (alas that it should be so.) But if any man sin we have an advocate with the *Father*, (not with God.) 'If we confess our Sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins,' &c."

These statements, like those on the preceding subject, and several others, can be fully answered, by plain Scripture truth, and by the constant practice of the Churches of many denominations, as well as by the experience of genuine Christian believers, through all the ages of Christianity. The whole prayer was given by our Lord to His chosen disciples and followers, according to their request,— "Lord teach us how to pray, as John also taught his disciples ;" whereupon, he instructed, and even *enjoined* them on the subject,—saying, "after

this manner therefore pray ye ;" giving the sublime and comprehensive form, seen in Matt. vi., 9-13, and ever since called by His name. Now these, surely, were Christian believers, for they had expressly acknowledged Him, as the Christ and Messiah; and were manifesting that faith, by having left their worldly occupations and possessions, and personally following Him in His ministry. They were to call God their Father, which they had no right to do, but through faith in Christ. And if *they* were to use it, and pray for forgiveness, why should not the same be suitable and proper for all Christians, to the end of time? It may well be concluded, that our Lord gave it as a pattern, or method, according to which, all His obedient people should pray to their God and Father. It has thus been considered and observed, by the great body of them, through all ages; and even those Christian denominations, who do not habitually use it, will readily admit, that it may most properly be used in public worship. As to praying for the forgiveness of sins, it is a Scripture truth, that *holiness*, or entire sanctification, is a progressive work; and in most,—and indeed all instances,—years and years are required, to obtain any fair degree of the inestimable grace and blessing. And until that holiness is attained, without which, as Scripture declares, "none shall see the Lord," the believing soul will daily have need to pray for forgiveness of trespasses, of some, or perhaps many descriptions.

In now closing these comments, which have become more extended than was at first designed, or anticipated, the writer can truly say, that he regrets the necessity for performing the Christian duty. He also thinks it right;—and possibly it may prove useful,—to say, that on several of the most important subjects treated of, he has intended the Scripture truths and comments, as much for the instruction and exhortation of members of other Churches, and for professors of Christianity generally, as for opposing the doctrinal errors of the Brethren. He also deems it just and right to add, that it is his firm belief, that the earnest piety, and Christian conduct of the Brethren, are fully equal to the same qualities in the members of the other Churches just referred to, if not, on the whole, actually exceeding them. This belief he has founded, chiefly on the fact, that the Brethren seem from their writings, to be more zealous, and free from mere *formalism* in religion; and more opposed to worldliness, and

corrupt and corrupting worldly conformities, than most of those in other churches. As a proof concerning these last, may be mentioned these sorrowful facts, that while very large numbers will assemble, to hear lectures about rivers, and lakes, mountains and prairies, and other geographical objects, in far distant regions ; and concerning a great variety of other mere worldly subjects, in which they can have little or no personal interest, but chiefly from mere *curiosity*, or desire for *amusement* ; a religious meeting to impart information relating to the extension of their Redeemer's kingdom, is very generally limited indeed. This was so obviously the case, at the last annual meeting of the great and excellent Bible Society,—when the glad tidings were given, of the increasing light and blessings of Divine truth,—so joyous to every true Christian heart,—that even one of our secular papers, remarked that “ as usual the attendance was so small, that only about 60 persons were present.” This was a mistake however, as to the number. There were full 100, when there should have been at least a *thousand*. There was nothing in the weather to prevent it.—Wherever such an instance occurs, it marks most manifestly, the very defective state of religious zeal and desire, as to the progress of Divine truth ; and an indifference to those solemn realities of eternity, in which all are so deeply and awfully interested.



SCRIPTURAL EXAMINATION OF A CLAUSE IN THE  
TWO CREEDS CALLED, "APOSTLES" AND  
"ATHANASIAN."

A controversy has recently arisen, and is still going forward in the English Church Establishment, as to rejecting or retaining, what is called the Athanasian Creed, repeated at certain specified times in the public worship in that Church. There are large numbers arrayed on each side of the controversy. A third party, but probably small, comparatively, as to numbers, are for a modification of the Creed, by rejecting certain portions of it. If this latter proposition is adopted, it may be hoped, that as one of the alterations the most required, that Clause will be omitted, which says of our Lord and Saviour ;— "He descended into hell." The same Clause is also in the Apostles' Creed, which is constantly used in the public services of the same church. If the clause is understood to mean, that our Lord actually went down into the place mentioned in Scripture, where the wicked are undergoing tormenting punishment, it may be confidently affirmed, that there is not any passage or authority in Scripture, to support such an opinion. Now, in proceeding to offer,—as is here intended, —some explanations and remarks on that clause, it is proper to show, first, the true origin of these Creeds, and of this clause especially ; and of the times in which it was inserted in them respectively. As to the one called the "Apostles' Creed,"—meaning the first Apostles,—they never formed it, or *any other*, as a Standard for Christian belief. Their Creed is to be found in the New Testament and there *only*. Neither was the other Creed, or any part of it, framed by the great and orthodox Athanasius. The Apostles' Creed,—so called, was brought into the present precise and Standard form, about, or upwards of 300 years after the deaths of the Apostles. That authentic and valuable Work, entitled,— "The History of the Primitive Church,"—by Lord Chancellor King,—himself a member of the Church of England,—gives a history of the true origin of the early Creeds, and particularly of this one bearing the name of the *Apostles*. In verification of what has just been advanced ; and for the information of those who are but slightly, if at all acquainted with the sub-

ject, there will now be given, some extracts from that high authority, which, it is proper to mention, treats of the Church History, only within the first 300 years.

Concerning the Creeds he says;—"As for that Creed which is commonly called the Apostles', all learned persons are now agreed, that it never was composed by them, neither do I find it within my prescribed time, (the first 300 years) but though they had not *that*, yet they had other Creeds very much like thereunto, which contained the fundamental articles of the Christian faith; unto which all Christians gave their *assent* and *consent*; and that publicly at baptism, whence, as before, it is called by Cyprian, 'the law of the symbol;' and by Novatian, 'the rule of truth.' This Creed was handed down from father to son, as a brief summary of the necessary Scripture truths; not in the same set words, but only the sense or substance thereof; which is evident from hence, that we never find the Creed twice repeated in the same words, no, not by one and the same father; which, that it may the more manifestly appear, as also, that we may see the congruity and affinity of the ancient creeds, with our present Creed, commonly called the Apostles', I shall transcribe in their original language, all the *whole* Creeds, and *pieces* of Creeds, that I find within the limited bounds." He then gives the words of *four* Creeds in whole, or parts thereof, in Greek, separately transcribed from the writings of the following Fathers,—as they are called,—namely;—Ignatius, Ireneus, Origen, and Gregory Neocæsar; and *Six*, in like manner, in Latin, by the Fathers,—Ireneus,—Tertullian,—Origen, and Cyprian. He then writes;—"These are all the Creeds which I have met with; in which the words are various, but generally recurring to the same sense." \* \* \* He then transcribes the Creed called the Apostles', as it stands in the prayer book of the Church of England,—with the exception of these two clauses;—"He descended into hell;" and "the Communion of Saints." He then says;—"Here are, now, these two clauses of our present Creed *wanting*. If we would know how they were added, we must first consider, how the whole Creed was framed; which I conceive was done two ways;—First, some of the articles were derived down from the very days of the Apostles. Secondly, others were added afterwards, in opposition to heresies as they sprung up in the Church." \* \* \* "By these two ways, then, was the Creed composed; and by the latter hereof were those two articles introduced. The 'Communion of Saints' was brought in last of all. The descent 'into hell,' toward the latter end of the fourth century."

As to the creed called "The Athanasian," Lord King says nothing, as it was not framed until after the centuries of which he was treat-

ing. This creed, which also contains the clause, "He descended into Hell," was framed a considerable time after the first council of Nice, A.D., 325. It was not drawn up by Athanasius, who, through illness, was not present at the holding of the Council. Eusebius, the historian, who attended the Council as one of its members, says:—"The Creed which is properly called the 'Nicene Creed,' was, by the appointment of the Council drawn up by the aged and venerable Hosius, bishop of Cordova, in Spain." It is given in its full and precise terms by Eusebius, and is that which is contained in the communion service of the English Church, and does not contain either the clause, "He descended into Hell," or, "the Communion of Saints." Although Athanasius was one of the most skilful and ardent of the debaters in the discussions which, previous to the Council, took place concerning the heresy of Arius,—respecting which chiefly the Council was convened—yet he was not a member of the Council, but at that time was only a Deacon of the Church of Alexandria; but some time after, most deservedly became its bishop. From these authentic historical facts it will be seen, that the creed called by the name of Athanasius, was not composed by him. Milner also says this in his "History of the Church." This creed, and also the one under the name of the Apostles, both containing the two clauses beforementioned, were for ages in use in the church of Rome; and at the time of the Reformation, were retained by the English established church, in framing and adopting its creeds and articles. How much better it would have been if those who established them, had been satisfied with retaining the *Nicene Creed only*, omitting that called *Athanasian*; and if retaining the one called the Apostles', rejecting the clause of the "descent into hell." This clause, in both these last mentioned creeds, was *foisted into them* in days of great ignorance of Scripture truth, and departures from it; and consequent *heresies, speculative conceptions and fabulous inventions*.

Under the foregoing state of authentic historical facts, regarding these creeds, the question may fairly be asked, where is the Scriptural authority for that clause in both creeds, "He descended into hell?" Or rather, it may truly and boldly be asserted, that there is no such authority, if the word *hell* is to be taken as meaning the place where the wicked are punished; and this seems to be meant by the word

*descended* being used. Those who contend for retaining the clause in the creeds, and that our Lord actually went down into the place where the wicked of mankind, and the fallen angels are being punished, found their opinion chiefly, if not altogether, on two portions of Scripture; one, the words in Ps. xvi. 10: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," and the other, the following passages in 1 Pet. ii. 19, 20: "Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing."

As to the word *hell* in the Psalm, it is a translation from the original word "*sheol*," in the Hebrew Old Testament Scriptures; and corresponds to the word "*Hades*," in the Greek of the New Testament; both meaning, as learned men skilled in those languages say, "the state of *separate spirits*, or the state of the dead,"—a state before the general resurrection,—of happiness for the pardoned and sanctified; and of tormenting punishment for the wicked. That learned scholar and critic in the ancient Hebrew and Greek languages, and celebrated commentator on the Scriptures, Dr. Adam Clark, in his comments on the words: "Shalt be brought down to hell," in Math. xi. 23, says of the word *hell*, "The original word is *Hades*, the invisible receptacle, or mansion of the dead, answering to *sheol* in Hebrew; and implying often, first—the grave; second—the state of *separate souls*, or *unseen world* of spirits, whether of *torment*,—Luke xvi. 23; or in *general*—Rev. i. 18, vi. 8, xx. 13, 14." Again, in his comments on the words, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," in Ps. xvi. 10; and repeated in Acts 2, 27, he says: "As to *leaving the soul in hell*, it can only mean permitting the life of the Messiah to continue under the power of death; for *Sheol* (Hebrew) and *Hades* (Greek) signify the state of separate spirits, or the state of the dead. *Hades* was a general term among the Greek writers, by which they expressed this state;" and with them this *Hades* was *Tartarus* to the wicked, and *Elysium* to the good."

Now, let us look at some of the particulars concerning the Saviour's death and resurrection, as recorded in the Scriptures:—In Luke xxiii, 43, it is written that he said to one of the malefactors on the Cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise;" and in v. 46: "And

when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father into thy hands I commend my Spirit, and having said this He gave up the Ghost." Thus far, all is totally different from "descending into hell," as a place of *torment*; the thought of which is simply *horrible*. The moment of his death his holy and blessed Spirit departed into the *separate state*, the heavenly paradise; and he took the ransomed spirit of the malefactor there, according to His promise. Surely, Paradise is not a *hell of punishment*. Early on the third day he united His Spirit to His body, and rose triumphant over death, and the grave, fulfilling to the *letter*, those prophetic portions of that cited Psalm more than 1000 years previous: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in (Hades) the place of separate spirits; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One (that is His body) to see corruption." Also fulfilling what he said to the Jews: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,"—meaning His body—John ii. 19; and also fulfilling the further prophecy in Ps. lxxiii. 18, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." It is noticeable that the word "ascended" here, is in direct opposition to the word "descended" in that clause of the creeds.

In addition to the Scripture proofs which have here been given, showing that by the word "hell" in the psalm, is not meant the place of punishment for the wicked; it may fairly be asked for what purpose could it be requisite, that our Lord should visit that region of misery? It could not have been to release them, or give them any promise, or hope of *release*; for His own words in the Scriptures, most positively and repeatedly declare, that the punishment of its inmates will be *everlasting*, and surely he would not go to tantalize or reproach them.

Some explanations and remarks may next be offered, regarding the other supposed authority, for our Lord's *descent* into the region of *torment*. It is in 1 Peter iii., 18, 19, 20, in the following words;—"Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by which also, he went and preached unto the Spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God, waited in the days of Noah, while the Ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water."

Now, first, it is perfectly clear from the words of the text, that our Lord did not *personally* go to those "Spirits in prison," but "by the Spirit," meaning evidently the Holy Spirit, who, in Scripture, is repeatedly called the "Spirit of Christ;" because of that Holy Spirit's operations for the regeneration and salvation of mankind, having, from the beginning,—by anticipation,—been obtained for those gracious purposes, by the sufferings and death of our adorable Redeemer and Saviour. Next, it is equally clear, that the "preaching," or the visitations of the Spirit, were only to those "disobedient" *antedeluvian* Spirits, and no others. And further, it is evident, that the preaching was in the days of Noah, before the deluge;—the words "when once the long suffering of God, waited in the days of Noah while the Ark was a preparing;" fixing it at that precise period, and no other. Now this was upwards of *a thousand years* before our Lord was born in the human nature. See now, from previous Scriptures, how all those particulars in the text, can be fully *harmonized*, and clearly show its meanings, as is here represented. In Gen. vi. 13, we read;—"And God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them, and behold I will destroy them, with the earth." He had previously declared to the same effect, as seen in the previous verses 5 and 7; and in v. 17. He declares, He will do it, "by a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life." He then commanded Noah to build the Ark, for the preservation of himself and his family. The Lord God thus condemned those sinners to that death and punishment, but yet in His great mercy, He granted them a respite from the execution of the sentence, that they might repent and turn from their wickedness, and thus prevent the fulfilment of the sentence. This is seen in the same ch. of Genesis v. 3, in these words;—"And the Lord said, my Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." This was the time the Ark was being built, and during this period, those sinners were like malefactors in prison, under sentence, but a respite from its execution was granted to them. It is quite probable that some of them did repent and find mercy. During this time, the "long suffering of God waited on them," as declared in that text in 1 Peter; and doubtless, the Divine Spirit,—Scriptur-



ally called the "Spirit of Christ"—was striving with those disobedient Spirits," thus under sentence; and Noah, who is called in 2 Peter, ch. ii., "a preacher of righteousness," was also reproving them, and warning them of the infliction of the threatened punishment. These particulars, which are in accordance with Scripture, afford a complete and even literal explanation of the meaning of every part of that text in 1 Peter; and fully show, that it affords not the least proof whatever, that our Lord Himself ever descended into the hell of punishment, as described in those Creeds.

That learned and able commentator,—Dr. A. Clark, remarking on these words of the text,—"*unto the Spirits in prison*," he says;—"The inhabitants of the antediluvian world, who having been *disobedient*, and convicted of the most flagrant transgressions against God, were sentenced by His just law to destruction. But their punishment was delayed, to see if they would *repent*; and the *long suffering of God*, waited one hundred and twenty years, which were granted to them for this purpose; during which time, as criminals tried and convicted, they are represented as being *in prison*. That the *Spirit of God* did *strive* with, convict, and reprove them, is evident from Gen. vi., 3; '*My Spirit shall not always strive with man, forasmuch as he is flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.*' And it was by this Spirit that Noah became a *preacher of righteousness*, and condemned that ungodly world—Heb. xi., 7. The word '*Spirits*,' is supposed to render this view of the subject improbable, because this must mean *disembodied Spirits*; but this certainly does not follow, for the *Spirits of just men made perfect*. Heb. xii., 23, certainly means *righteous men*, and men still in the Church militant; and the *Father of Spirits*, Heb. xii., 9, means men *still in the body*: and the *God of the Spirits of all flesh*. Num. xvi., 22 and xxvi., 16 means *men not in a disembodied state*."

But even on this word there are several various readings. I have before me one of the first, if not the very *first edition* of the *Latin Bible*; and in it the verse stands thus:—*In quo et hiis qui in carcere erunt Spiritualiter veniens prædicavit*;—'by which he came *spiritually*, and preached to them that were in prison.' In two very ancient MSS. of the *Vulgate*, before me, the clause is thus, "*in which coming by the spirit*, he preached to those who were in prison." This is the reading also in the *Complutensian Polyglot*. The Dr. then mentions two other MSS. which give the word, *spiritually*, and then says:—

"I have quoted all these authorities from the most authentic and correct copies of the Vulgate, to show that from them there is no ground to believe that the text speaks of Christ's going to hell to preach the Gospel to the damned, or of his going to some feigned place, where the souls of the patriarchs were detained, to whom he preached, and whom he delivered from that place and took with Him to Paradise, which the Romish Church holds as an article of faith."

An amount of proof has now been given, even more than positively needed, showing most conclusively, that neither of the texts which have been supposed to support the clause in the two creeds, that Christ *descended* into the *hell* of the *wicked and suffering spirits*, are in the least degree available for that purpose. The writer, in here closing with this part of the subject, further *confidently asserts*, that there is not the slightest *Scripture authority*, on which to form a belief that our Lord ever *personally* went into that place of punishment, *for any purpose whatever*.

Under the foregoing Scripture proofs on the subject, the only proper conclusion is, that the unscriptural clause should be struck out of the two creeds. But if this is not done, those who *will* continue to utter it in repeating the creeds, should, in doing so, attach in their minds, the true scriptural meaning, that our Lord *ascended*—not *descended*—into the separate state of righteous spirits, the Paradise of God. It is a melancholy thought that vast multitudes, young and old, for hundreds of years, have been using that awful word in the clause, as meaning the abode of misery and despair, so contrary to Scripture truth. The blame has been very far more with the *higher* portions of the *clerical order* than with the body of the laity. It is truly a subject for profound regret that a Church whose formularies of worship are so spiritual, and some of them even sublime, and in whose ministry there have been such eminently pious and excellent men, should still retain in those creeds and in one of its articles that erroneous tenet.

EXPOSITION OF THE BELIEF OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC  
CHURCH AS TO THE MEANING OF THE WORDS :

“SPIRITS IN PRISON,” IN 1 PETER, iii. 19,  
WITH REMARKS THEREON.

Some facts and remarks may here be appropriately given, regarding the belief of the Roman Catholic Church, on the beforementioned texts in 1 Peter, ch. 3, concerning those “Spirits in prison.” The texts, as rendered in the standard Douay version of the Bible of that Church, read thus:—“Because Christ also died once for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might offer us to God; being put to death, indeed, in the flesh, but brought to life by the Spirit. In which also, he came and preached to those Spirits who were in prison: Who in time past had been incredulous, when they waited for the patience of God in the days of Noe, when the Ark was a building.”

The following is a foot-note on the words “Spirits in prison:”—

“See here a proof of a third place, or middle state of souls; for these spirits in prison, to whom Christ went to preach after his death, were not in Heaven, nor yet in the hell of the damned; because Heaven is no prison, and Christ did not go to preach to the damned.”

What is here said as to Heaven, and Christ’s preaching to the *damned*, is certainly scriptural and true; and possibly as to a middle state of souls also. But on this last point there are different opinions among scripturally learned and good men. With regard to our Lord’s visit, or rather *supposed* visit to the “spirits in prison,” the following passages are contained in the catechism of the Roman Catholic Church:—

- Q. *Where did Christ’s soul go after his death?*
- A. It descended into hell.—Apostles’ Creed.
- Q. *Did Christ’s Soul descend into the Hell of the damned?*
- A. No; but to a place or state of rest, called *Limbo*.—Acts ii. 24, 27—Psalm xv, 10.
- Q. *Who were in Limbo?*
- A. The souls of the Saints who died before Christ.
- Q. *Why did Christ descend into Limbo?*
- A. St. Peter says,—*To preach to those spirits that were in prison*; that is, to announce to them in person, the joyful tidings of their redemption.—1 Pet. iii. 19.

Q. *Why did not the souls of the Saints who died before Christ go to Heaven immediately after death?*

A. Because Heaven was shut against them by the sin of our first parents, and could not be opened to any one, but by the death of Christ.

Q. *When did the souls of the Saints who died before Christ go into Heaven?*

A. When Christ ascended into Heaven.

It is perfectly evident that there is in this part of the catechism a direct opposition to those texts in 1 Peter, given from the Douay Bible; for *there*, "the Spirits in prison," are expressly declared to be *those*, and *only those*, who were *incredulous* in the days of Noe, when the Ark was a building; but in the catechism the "spirits in prison" are declared to be "the souls of the Saints who died before Christ;" meaning of course, the whole multitudes of them. It is quite impossible to reconcile or harmonize these two subjects, or dogmas of faith. But further, it is said, in that text in Peter, in the Douay Bible, and also referred to in the catechism, that those "spirits in prison," declared to be "all the Saints before Christ" were *incredulous*, that is, unbelieving. This is still more amazing, and contradictory to several other parts of that same Bible; for it says of Abraham in Rom. iv. 19, 20, 21, "he was not weak in faith. In the promise also of God, he staggered not by distrust, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God; most fully knowing that whatsoever He has promised, he is able also to perform." In the same chapter are the words:—"Of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." But, further, is there not something saddening, if not revolting, in the supposition that the spirits of the pious Abel, the fully devoted Enoch and Noah, the pious and noble Abraham, called the "father of the faithful" and the "friend of God;" also of Isaac and Jacob, of the zealous and devoted Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, the highly gifted Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, the beloved Daniel, and all the other faithful servants, through all the *four thousand years* of the world down to the resurrection of our Lord, were all "in prison," "because Heaven was shut against them by the sin of our first parents." As to Enoch, the scripture says "he walked with God and God took him;" surely not to *put his spirit "in prison."* Of Elias also, it is said in the same Douay Bible, 4th Kings, ii. 11, "behold a fiery chariot and fiery

horses parted them both asunder, and Elias went up by a whirlwind into heaven." Now, as the before cited note on the text in 1 Peter very properly says, "Heaven is no prison." Here, then, are two of those saints, who, by express testimony of Scripture, did not go *into prison*, but directly to *Heaven*. Neither did the spirits of those other Old Testament Saints "go into prison," or *Limbo*.

As to their being "incredulous,"—the word used in that text in 1 Peter—quite the contrary is said of them in the same Bible in Heb. 11, where the faith of Abel, Enoch, Noe, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are mentioned. Also of Joseph, Moses, Gideon, Barak, David, Samuel, and others of eminence, and also of the prophets, of all of whom it is said in v. 13, of the same chapter: "All these died according to faith, not having received the promises; but beholding them afar off, and saluting them, and confessing that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth." And in v. 39, "All these being approved by the testimony of faith."

Now, how are all these inconsistencies and express contradictions to be reconciled? It seems simply impossible. The text in the Bible and the note thereon are far more correct than the catechism.

In coming to a conclusion on the subject, it may be allowable for the writer to say, that for upwards of *fifty years* he has been daily and prayerfully reading and studying the sacred Scriptures, but has never met with a single passage which gives the slightest intimation of the souls of those Old Testament Saints being "in prison:" or confined to any place called *Limbo*, or by any other name. But if any person can direct his attention to any portion or parts of Scripture, which afford proof, or even any reasonable ground for a supposition to that effect, he will examine them carefully. But until he sees some Scripture which gives a fair ground, or countenance, for that opinion, he will continue to believe, that the souls of all those faithful and divinely beloved saints, ever were, and still are, in freedom, and richly enjoying the glories and happiness of the heavenly state.

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